

The  
PRODIGAL SON  
PROPHECY

God's Amazing Plan for the Restoration of the Two  
Hebrew Houses and the Salvation of the Gentiles

By Dr. Scott Lively

**THE PRODIGAL SON PROPHECY**  
Veritas Aeterna Press,  
PO Box 2373, Springfield, Massachusetts, 01101

Copyright, Scott Lively Ministries, 2019

Throughout this book we have used the King James for accuracy and NASB or BSB for clarity in modern English, which usage falls within “fair use” guidelines.

Unless otherwise noted, photos and graphics are public domain or the property of the author.

To preserve flow, long quotations from Scripture are not indented but long non-Scriptural quotations are indented.

.

## DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to Marian Oxana,  
whose comments over dinner, in the company of her husband Vitalie,  
in Chisnau, Moldova in late February of 2011,  
launched me on the intensive study of prophecy  
that the book is based upon.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<b>Name</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Page</b>
01 Yeshua's Chronology of End-Time Events in Matthew 24-25.....	Author.....	27
02 Leviticus 23: The Feasts of the Lord.....	Author.....	30
03 The Ten Days of Awe/Wrath.....	Author.....	33
04 Yeshua's Chronology of End-Time Events in Revelation 6-20.....	Author.....	40
05 Deciphering the Revelation Chronology.....	Author.....	45
06 Deciphering the Revelation Chronology II.....	Author.....	46
07 The Hebrew Feast Cycle in the Gospel of John.....	Author.....	63
08 The Feast Cycle in John – Passage by Passage.....	Author.....	63
09 Letters to the Left Behind.....	Author.....	77
10 The Lord's Supper as a Rehearsal for the Second Coming.....	Author.....	91
11 Menorah of Zechariah's Vision.....	Cervera Bible 1299–1300.....	107

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### PRELIMINARIES

•	TITLE PAGE & PUBLISHING INFORMATION.....	1.
•	DEDICATION.....	2.
•	LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	3.
•	TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	4.
•	INTRODUCTION: WHOLE-BIBLE CHRISTIANITY.....	8.
•	FOREWORD: MY PERSONAL GROUND RULES FOR PROPHECY STUDY.....	12.
•	A SHORT SUMMARY OF THE PRODIGAL SON PROPHECY.....	18.
•	THE HEBREW ROOTS MOVEMENT AS A MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH.....	22.

### SECTION ONE

	<b>A FRESH LOOK AT END TIME PROPHECY: A Christian Lawyer and Pastor Examines the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible “De Novo,” from the Hebrew Cultural Perspective of the First Century Church.....</b>	<b>24.</b>
•	<b>CHAPTER 1: WHAT JESUS TAUGHT THE DISCIPLES ABOUT THE LAST DAYS.....</b>	<b>26.</b>
	YESHUA’S CHRONOLOGY OF END TIME EVENTS IN MATTHEW 24-25.....	27.
	THE RAPTURE AND THE RETURN OF THE KING.....	29.
	THE FEASTS OF THE LORD.....	30.
	THE TEN DAYS OF AWE.....	33.
	THE SEVEN STAGES OF THE LAST DAYS.....	36.
	YESHUA’S CHRONOLOGY OF END TIME EVENTS IN REVELATION 6-19.....	40.
	DECIPHERING THE REVELATION CHRONOLOGY.....	44.
	USING BIBLICAL SYMBOLISM TO ALIGN THE OLIVET DISCOURSE AND REVELATION.....	48.
	THE SEASON OF THE END.....	50.
•	<b>CHAPTER 2: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SEVENS.....</b>	<b>52.</b>
	NOT EITHER/OR, BUT BOTH/AND.....	54.
	DANIEL’S SEVENTY WEEKS AND THE PROBLEM OF THE 70 <sup>TH</sup> WEEK.....	56.
	GOD, NOT ANTICHRIST, IS THE ONE WHO “MAKES DESOLATE.”.....	58.
	SEVEN YEARS OR THREE AND ONE HALF?.....	58.
	THE COMPLETION OF THE 70 <sup>TH</sup> WEEK.....	59.
	THE REPEATING PATTERN OF THE DESECRATION OF JERUSALEM.....	60.

THE REPEATING PATTERN OF PASSOVER.....	62.
THE HEBREW FEAST CYCLE IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.....	64.
• <b>CHAPTER 3: LETTERS TO THE “LEFT BEHIND”</b> .....	76.
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AND THE OUTER DARKNESS.....	80.
SALVATION WILL STILL BE POSSIBLE DURING THE 10 DAYS OF AWE.....	82.
THE LETTERS TO THE LEFT BEHIND.....	82.
EPHESUS -- FIRST WARNING: REPENT TO BE SPARED THE WRATH.....	83.
SMYRNA -- ‘LEFT BEHIND,’ YES. BUT FOR HOW LONG?.....	83.
PERGAMUM -- ABANDON FALSE DOCTRINES OR DIE WITH THE WICKED.....	84.
THYATIRA -- SECOND WARNING ABOUT CANAANITE IDOLATRY AND PERVERSION.....	85.
SARDIS -- DON’T BE UNPREPARED LIKE THE FOOLISH VIRGINS.....	86.
PHILADEPHIA -- SALVATION REQUIRES ENDURANCE.....	87.
LAODICEA -- FINAL WARNING: REPENT TO BE SPARED THE WRATH.....	87.
POSTSCRIPT.....	88.
• <b>CHAPTER 4: THE WINEPRESS OF GOD’S WRATH</b> .....	90.
THE HARVEST OF THE GRAPES.....	90.
THE LORD’S SUPPER AS A <i>MOED</i> FOR THE RAPTURE AND WRATH.....	91.
THE RETURN OF CHRIST “TO JUDGE AND MAKE WAR.”.....	92.
THE EXODUS PATTERN IN THE WINEPRESS STORY.....	93.
• <b>CHAPTER 5: THE SALVATION OF “THE JEWS”</b> .....	96.
JEWS, ISRAELITES AND HEBREWS: WHO’S WHO?.....	98.
WHO ARE THE JEWS TODAY?.....	99.
BY THEIR FRUIT.....	102.
ARE MODERN “JEWS” EVEN JEWS? (YES!).....	103.

## **SECTION TWO**

<b>THE TWO HOUSE PROPHECY:</b> The division and reunification of the House of Jacob as the backdrop to the story of Christianity.....	106.
• INTRODUCTION TO SECTION TWO.....	108.
• <b>CHAPTER 6: JUDAH’S SCEPTER AND JOSEPH’S BIRTHRIGHT</b> .....	110.
THE DIVISION OF THE PROMISES TO TWO SEPARATE HOUSES.....	112.
THE TWO HOUSES UNDER KING DAVID.....	115.
• <b>CHAPTER 7: THE TWO HOUSES BECOME TWO KINGDOMS</b> .....	118.
REHOBOAM AND JEROBOAM.....	120.
WAYWARD ISRAEL.....	121.

ISRAEL BUT NOT JUDAH DIVORCED BY GOD.....	124.
THE TWO HOUSES AS “WIVES” AND “SONS” OF GOD.....	124.
DIVORCED ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS.....	127.
ISRAEL IN THE AGE OF THE GENTILES.....	128.
THE TWO HOUSE TEACHING OF JESUS IN THREE PARABLES.....	130.
THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP.....	130.
THE PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN.....	131.
THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON.....	132.
• <b>CHAPTER 8: THE REMARRIAGE OF ISRAEL TO GOD.....</b>	<b>136.</b>
THE DIVORCE CONUNDRUM.....	136.
THE EXPANSION OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL.....	142.
THE TWELVE, THE SEVENTY, AND THE CHURCH.....	143.
• <b>CHAPTER 9: THE RETURN TO THE LAND.....</b>	<b>148.</b>
DID ISRAEL RETURN FROM BABYLON WITH JUDAH?.....	148.
IF NOT AFTER BABYLONIAN EXILE THEN WHEN?.....	153.
ISRAEL’S FIRST AND SECOND RETURN TO THE LAND.....	155.
THREE PARABLES ABOUT THE RETURN.....	158.
THE PARABLE OF THE DRY BONES.....	158.
THE PARABLE OF THE TWO STICKS.....	160.
THE PARABLE OF THE DAVIDIC KINGDOM.....	161.
• <b>CHAPTER 10: UNTIL SHILOH COMES.....</b>	<b>162.</b>
THE TWO-HOUSE PROPHECY OF JACOB.....	162.
THE VINE OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL.....	162.
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SHILOH.....	164.
TABERNACLE V. TEMPLE.....	164.
SHILOH AS A SYMBOL OF CHRIST THE JUDGE.....	166.
SHILOH AS A SYMBOL OF CHRIST THE KING.....	167.
SHILOH AS A SYMBOL OF THE RETURN TO THE LAND.....	168.
CONCLUSION TO SECTION TWO.....	169.

**SECTION THREE**

**WHAT COMES NEXT.....**

- THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES.....





# PRELIMINARIES

## INTRODUCTION: WHOLE-BIBLE CHRISTIANITY

I love the Living Word of God, the Bible. Of course, God also speaks to us through His wondrous Creation, and in the still, small voice of His Holy Spirit, who literally dwells in those who have accepted Christ as Savior. But His Bible is our complete, detailed instruction manual in all things that pertain to this life and the one to come. It is a resource of inestimable value whose counsel and decrees overwhelmingly trump every human authority on every possible question. To believe that and act accordingly is the essence of what it means to have a “Biblical worldview.”

Much of the church of the modern western world has lost that Biblical worldview. Biblical literacy has plummeted, worldly “wisdom” has supplanted Biblical authority in the minds of average Christians on any number of issues, and most disturbingly, the church as a whole has developed what I characterize as “New Testament Myopia”: the nearly exclusive emphasis on the New Testament in preaching and teaching. The Old Testament is regarded as “Jewish stuff,” largely irrelevant to Christianity except in small doses to illustrate some point of New Testament doctrine.

However, when Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:16 that “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*” he used the Greek word *graphe*, meaning the Old Testament. He undoubtedly meant to include in his definition of scripture what we know today as “New Testament” writings, but when Paul wrote 2 Timothy, the various scattered pieces of the New Testament had not yet been assembled, and 2 Peter, Hebrews, Jude, Revelation and the Gospel and letters of John had not even been written. Before He had supplanted the Mosaic law by His death and resurrection, Jesus Himself told His disciples in Matthew 23:2-3: “*The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. So practice and observe everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.*”

God gave Christians the whole Bible, and all of its books are His Living Word. Jesus didn't bring the New Covenant to "correct the mistakes" of the Father or apologize for His "excesses." He said "*I and the Father are One,*" and built directly upon the foundation of the Old Covenant, teaching emphatically that "*until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.*" His teachings augment and elevate the Old Testament, but as He Himself made clear, they don't abolish it (Matthew 5:17-19).

In contrast to and correction of "New Testament Myopia" is what I call Whole Bible Christianity, which I define as embracing and following the whole counsel of God's Word. Here in America, from the time of the Pilgrim's landing till just a few decades ago, Christians read, trusted and followed the whole Bible, and not just the New Testament. Our government was designed on principles drawn largely from the Old Testament, such as Isaiah 33:22 "*For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.*" That scripture is the basis for our tripartite governmental structure and constitutional separation of powers. Until relatively recently our courts followed the "Common Law," drawn primarily from Old Testament, and the whole Bible – from Genesis to Revelation -- was America's favorite public school textbook.

We have been greatly impoverished by losing our whole-Bible perspective and many if not most of our social ills are the direct consequence. It is one thing to affirm the New Testament truth that Christians are not bound to the letter of the law or the rituals. It's an entirely different and unscriptural matter to treat the law, the rituals, the feasts, the history and the prophecies of the Old Testament as discarded relics of the past and to replace them with human-created alternatives.

As Jesus taught in the Beatitudes, Christians are actually held to a higher standard than the written law, in being subject to it's underlying spirit and intention (e.g hate is murder, lust is adultery). So while in His grace we can exercise freedom in HOW we keep the law, and we are assured that the penalty for our sins was paid by His blood, we nevertheless remain subject to its underlying principles, and not granted a license to sin in any aspect of it. The Olive Tree into which we are grafted is still rooted in Old Testament soil (Romans 11).

Whole Bible Christianity is thus compatible in many ways with the emerging Messianic Judaism movement which accepts Jesus as the Messiah and attempts to realign the beliefs and practices of modern Judaism to Him. However, just as it is true that the "whole Bible" Christians of the very early years of the church closely fellowshiped with Jews on the Sabbath (Saturday) in the synagogues, their separate worship of Christ was done on the first day of the week (Sunday). And Paul, the former "Pharisee of Pharisees," was even then strongly cautioning believers not to trade their freedom in Christ for the legalism of ritual Judaism (see especially Galatians 3), as some in Messianic Judaism have done.

Importantly, the form of Judaism influencing many of today's Messianic Jews is not primarily the Temple-centered Torah-based Judaism of the Apostles era which was still debating whether Jesus was

the Messiah, but the Jesus-rejecting second century (and following) Babylonian Talmudic form observed in the Jewish Diaspora after the final Roman expulsion of the Jews from the Holy Land in 135AD.

Let me clarify that I believe Bible-faithful Messianic Judaism will be the religion of the Millennial Kingdom, practiced by the human beings living on earth during the coming thousand year physical reign of Christ. And I think its emergence in this generation is a Holy Spirit phenomenon, representing the front edge of the cusp of the reunification of the two Hebrew houses that will be completed in the Millennial Kingdom. Thus, Christians should embrace and facilitate it's development by exhorting Messianic Jews to anchor firmly in the Bible and not the Talmud. And we should welcome with eagerness the wealth of knowledge that Messianic Jews can share with us about the Hebrew roots of Christianity.

Whole Bible Christianity is then a place of common ground – a theologically “safe space” – for the traditional branches of Christianity to interface with Messianic Judaism for mutual enrichment.

It is upon that common ground that the foundations for this book are laid, because nowhere are the Hebrew roots of Christianity more essential than in the field of prophecy. And indeed, I suggest that it is not possible to correctly discern the plan of God for our future without a firm grasp of the Hebrew cultural perspective of the prophets and the Apostles. To that thesis, this book is offered as evidence.



## FOREWORD: MY PERSONAL GROUND RULES FOR PROPHECY STUDY

### 1. Be Humble

There have been many spectacular failures in the field of prophecy, most of which involve setting dates for the return of Christ or some other key end-times milestone. From William Miller in the mid-1800s to Hal Lindsey and Harold Camping in more recent decades, the trail is littered with examples of what we might charitably call bad guesses -- except most of these “guessers” spoke with certainty about their predictions.

I want to avoid that pitfall. While I am diligent in my research and know that God has gifted me with a good analytical mind, I freely confess that I do not have all the answers, and that I could be wrong on any number of facts or speculations.

But neither do I want to run with the mob that bashes “date setters” as heretics as is so fashionable today. In my reading of Scripture I find no Biblical prohibition on speculating about the timing of the second coming or other future events, so long as one doesn’t make the deadly mistake of falsely claiming to speak for the Lord (Deuteronomy 18:20). If in this study I venture to make educated guesses about future events I will endeavor to clarify the speculative nature of my conclusions and show the steps in my deductive reasoning.

Furthermore, unlike most prophecy teachers I have encountered, I readily admit that most of what I know is based on others’ work. Sometimes I have original ideas by the prompting of the Holy Spirit (these are moments of great excitement) but, like everyone else, I learned most of what I know from other people. I will endeavor to give them credit where it is due.

Importantly, I am not in complete agreement with any of the prophecy teachers I have read. Indeed, I believe some of them are wrong in most of what they teach. However, I always intend to accept truth where I find it and never to “throw out the baby with the bath-water.”

*“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).*

The Biblically-minded scholar should carry the two-edged sword of Hebrews 4:12 metaphorically into every intellectual pursuit: dividing truth from error with precision, always preserving and honoring what is true. And conversely, rejecting what is false, no matter how eminent the person asserting it. God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34) and neither should we be.

## **2. Think Like a Judge, Not a Lawyer**

*“Do not show partiality in judging; hear both small and great alike. Do not be afraid of anyone, for judgment belongs to God” (Deut 1:17).*

I happen to be a lawyer in addition to being a pastor. Lawyers are often paid big money for their skills in advocating for their clients. In other words, we specialize in championing one point of view against all opposing views.

Judges on the other hand have an ethical duty to be impartial and to hear all the evidence before rendering an opinion on a matter.

In studying prophecy we should not only think like judges -- holding our conclusions lightly and remaining open-minded as we go -- but we should also be very hesitant to draw firm conclusions because so much of the evidence before us is necessarily speculative. How could it be otherwise when many of the prophetic events we’re considering haven’t happened yet?

Unfortunately, many Christians tend to think and act like lawyers on matters of doctrine, including eschatology (the study of end-times theology). It is a problem that is in fact worsened by the phenomenon of denominationalism in which churches train members exclusively in their own perspective of Scripture, rather than teaching a holistic biblical worldview and critical thinking skills with which to understand the Bible for themselves.

Denominationally-bound believers typically hear one perspective on prophecy and then start advocating for it without any real understanding of other views. Look at the comments sections under prophecy-oriented news stories on the Internet and you’ll see lots of these folks battling it out like armchair quarterbacks after a Superbowl game.

In this book I will make arguments for what I believe to be the correct conclusions but also acknowledge opposing views, especially regarding matters of which I am less confident.

## **3. Stay Biblically Grounded**

I believe in the absolute authority of the Bible in all matters of doctrine and theology and in a contextual interpretation of its meaning within the holistic totality of all the Scripture. This study will therefore rest on a foundation of Scripture. Most of my key assertions will include citations to the Scriptural references I rely upon.

One glaring fault shared by many prophecy teachers today is the problem of selective editing of the Bible. Beware of teachers who rely heavily on Scriptures which support their theories and ignore or dismiss passages contradictory to them.

I strongly believe that if one can't reconcile the apparent contradictions in the text of the Bible -- in a manner that flows smoothly and naturally -- then one doesn't yet understand the truth being conveyed.

In my view, the Word of God is perfectly harmonious and I will work to present a natural reading of it in this study.

#### **4. Follow a Hebrew rather than a Hellenic Perspective**

*“Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 1:3).*

Every word of the Holy Bible was written down before the end of the first century by those who either received the teaching of the Judean Messiah, Jesus Christ, personally or secondhand via one of His Hebrew disciples. The *“faith which was once for all handed down to the saints,”* is thus best understood from the Hebrew cultural perspective they shared, not the Hellenic (Greek) perspective of the generations that followed.

As Paul emphasized, the Gospel of Christ was only a *“stumbling block”* to the Jews (our spiritual first cousins) but was *“to the Greeks, foolishness”* (1 Corinthians 1:23). (“Greeks” in this context refer to all the various ethnicities and nationalities of the Roman Empire, whose culture was adopted from the Greek Empire it had conquered and supplanted. The presuppositions of the “Greeks” regarding God specifically and spiritual matters generally, were far different from those of Jews and Christians.)

Likewise, the study of prophecy is a minefield for those who study it from a Greek perspective, and they are invariably forced to “spiritualize” (and thus confuse) concepts, symbols and events that make perfect literal sense from a Torah-literate Hebrew perspective.

This is not, however, a Catholic or Orthodox v. Reformed issue, because nearly every Christian denomination since Constantine follows a Greek perspective regarding prophecy.

Neither does “Hebrew perspective” in this context mean “Jewish perspective” since modern Talmudic Judaism does not necessarily hold the Hebrew perspective of the first century, which was Torah-based (what Jesus called *“the law and the prophets”* in Matthew 5: 17). In contrast, the earliest portions of the Talmud were written in Babylon starting around 200 AD. Thus, the legitimacy of the various Jewish sources today must be measured by their faithfulness to the Torah, not the Talmud, just as Christian sources must be measured by their faithfulness to the Bible, not denominational leaders or doctrines.

Importantly, contrary to the false claims of some critics of the Hebrew Roots movement, seeking the Hebrew perspective as a guide to deeper understanding of Scripture does not mean that Christians should go back under the law of Moses. Paul warns against that very clearly in his epistles, writing for example:

*“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith”* (Galatians 3:13-14).

Yet, former Pharisee Paul, God’s choice to be the Apostle to the Gentiles, revealed the perfect balance of law and grace in his Hebrew Roots teachings: tempering Galatians 3 with such passages as Romans 11 (where the Hebrew Roots theme originates), and Hebrews 5:11-6:20, where he sharply rebukes those who lack a Hebrew perspective of Scripture regarding God’s promises to Abraham.

To clarify, then, I define “Hebrew perspective” as “The New Testament interpreted primarily through the teachings of the Old-Testament-as-read-literally, supplemented by the writings of the first century disciples of the Apostles, who may be presumed to know better than anyone else what Jesus and the Apostles meant by the things they said, and for whom the subtleties and nuances of the parables, metaphors and symbols employed in Scripture were understood as present-day cultural references.”

After I began studying prophecy from a Hebrew perspective, I was forced to reconsider many of the things I thought I already knew about prophecy.

## **5. How to Get the Most out of This Study**

First, wipe the slate clean and resolve to restudy prophecy anew from scratch, letting go of whatever you may have already been taught. Be ready to reclaim those beliefs that you can confirm by your own Berean-style study and to leave behind or modify those that you discover are false or flawed.

Second, buy a new Bible exclusively for prophecy study and mark it up with highlighting, and margin notes, and insert additional note pages in key sections. It will be very helpful to have all the key passages flagged.

Third, start re-reading the Old Testament with a prophetic eye and a literalist’s mind, from Genesis 1:1 -- examining every Scripture for its end-time implications, as if the entire Bible was written for the last days as much or more than for ages past (as I am convinced it was). Read voraciously.

Lastly, stay in fellowship with Bible-grounded believers. The last days are upon us and the world as we have known it is crumbling apace. Let us take joy in the fellowship of the remnant and seek value in these relationships rather than in the darkening material world. Let’s us also search evangelistically and diligently for others to join us in this lifeboat.



## 6. How this Book is Organized

This book has two distinct sections.

The first section, **A Fresh Look at End-Time Prophecy**, is an attempt to identify and explicate the fundamentals of end-time prophecy from a first-century Christian perspective, as if none of the various existing prophecy assumptions being taught by the various denominations had been written. Many “mainstream” Christians will be unfamiliar with the facts presented in this section but will likely find them very interesting and illuminating. Some of the analysis and conjecture in this section is original to the author, while most is a compilation, re-phrasing and reorganization of the teachings of various competent teachers and scholars.

The second section, **The Two House Prophecy**, is a reinterpretation and revalidation of the so-called Two House Teaching that was well known to many nineteenth and early twentieth century Christian believers but rejected by later generations after it was co-opted and corrupted by various cultic and racist organizations.

In its original, uncorrupted form, this astonishingly powerful and enriching Bible teaching, which is not in the least racist or antisemitic in its original form, opens a dimension of Bible knowledge that can be likened to putting on spiritual 3-D eyeglasses. Once enlightened, the student will begin to recognize the Two House teaching interwoven throughout the entire Bible, with profound theological implications.

*I implore the reader who has previously encountered this teaching in any form not to prejudge this section as if you already know its assertions and arguments. In my experience very few Christians have encountered the original pristine form of the teaching that is presented here. Please give me a chance to walk you through the facts as the Bible presents them, uncorrupted by the human agendas that have tainted nearly every variation of this teaching that has emerged over the past century.*



## A SHORT SUMMARY OF THE PRODIGAL SON PROPHECY

Like so many of the teachings of Jesus, an apparently simple message unlocks a door to profound understanding of the things of God...but only for those who have eyes to see. Jesus said that He taught in parables intentionally to hide the deeper truths of His teachings from the less diligent, so that “*seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand*” (Luke 8:10).

One way to see but not see the teaching of the Parable of the Prodigal Son is to interpret the message at its most superficial level -- that God joyfully welcomes sinners who repent. How many sermons have we all heard (or, like me, preached) in mainstream Christian churches on that theme?

That teaching is, of course, true, but it’s not the main point or purpose of the parable.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son is a teaching by Jesus on the restoration and reunion of the House of Judah and the House of Israel in the last days. He was expounding it to fellow Hebrews who should all have been intimately familiar with the prophecies of Isaiah, Hosea, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and others that addressed the division of the twelve tribes of the House of Jacob and their eventual reunification in the Millennial Kingdom. Many of the then-current Jewish leaders -- being Herodians (Edomite converts to Judaism aligned with Edomite King Herod) or being Judaic hyper-legalists (whose extra-Biblical theology supplanted the Bible) -- were less likely to know these prophecies.

Only people with an authentic *Hebrew* Biblical worldview could actually see what Jesus wanted them to see. And that remains true to this day. Only competent knowledge of the Scripture *from an Apostolic-era Hebrew perspective* unlocks the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

Very simply, the father in the parable is God. The older son is Judah, and the younger (prodigal) son is Joseph. These are the two sons of Jacob’s wives Leah and Rachel, respectively (the human roots of the two houses and later two kingdoms of Judah and Israel). Joseph, who is represented by his son Ephraim among the twelve tribes (as the head of the House of Israel), led his house into idolatrous rebellion against God so egregiously that God “divorced” the House of Israel and sent him/they away to live among the Gentiles. God then made a way for Israel to be restored that simultaneously opened the door to salvation for the Gentiles. To allay any doubt of His intended meaning to the alert Hebrew listeners, Jesus designed the parable to directly parallel the metaphorical restoration of the symbolic “Prodigal Son” to the actual restoration of the actual prodigal son Joseph (the patriarch of the House of Israel) by Pharaoh in Genesis 41.

That, in its most simplistic form, is the deeper and more profound meaning of the parable, hidden in plain sight from Christians (like myself) who had always looked at the Old Testament as “Jewish stuff” only marginally relevant to Christians.

If these ideas seem foreign to you, prepared to be shocked at how foundational they are to prophecy as it is actually written in the Old Testament. You will find that these aren't mere speculation, but the plain, literal teaching of prophets, when seen through the proper contemporary Hebrew cultural perspective.

This summary is just to whet your appetite. The deep and detailed scriptural support for this summary is explained in Chapter Seven for those who would like to read ahead, though it would be best to approach this study systematically, reading the book in the sequence in which it is written. We've constructed this book carefully, precept upon precept, line upon line, to make clear and simple what might otherwise seem complex and obtuse if approached piecemeal.

Importantly, while the Parable (the key) can be unpacked and explained in a few pages, the far more valuable treasure lies behind the door that it unlocks: the Hebrew cultural perspective of the Word that can (with diligent study) illuminate ALL of the rest of the Bible to the initiated, including the Two House teaching that is so central to history and prophecy. That door is now open to the reader who grasps the premise. The astounding implications of it will become increasingly more obvious as you proceed.

What we mean by Whole Bible perspective is the study of Scripture as it would have been understood by first century Christians in the Hebrew cultural milieu that the Apostles and their disciples shared throughout their entire lives, as distinct from the Hellenic (Greek) perspective of the church in later centuries. The latter is a perspective which persists even to this day, recognized in such things as the keeping of Christianized pagan holidays (e.g., Christmas and Easter<sup>1</sup>) to the exclusion or outright ignorance of the actual Biblical holidays established by God in Leviticus 23 (e.g., Passover, Tabernacles).

Again, we feel it necessary to distinguish Whole Bible Christianity from the Hebrew Roots Movement, which has been mischaracterized by critics as a collection of Judaizing cults drawing Christians back under the law of Moses, when in reality the movement includes a broad spectrum of Hebrew-oriented organizations and individuals who simply seek to explore and understand the Hebrew perspective on New Testament teachings -- from otherwise thoroughly mainstream Christian churches which have a nominal interest in the Hebrew perspective, to full-fledged "Messianic Jewish" groups and individuals who accept Christ as Messiah but also study and attempt to follow the Mosaic law.

By defining our approach as Whole Bible Christianity we seek to show that holding a Hebrew cultural perspective of the Scripture does not equate to trading freedom in Christ for Jewish legalism, though some in the Hebrew Roots movement do that. Remember that it was Paul who showed the healthy balance between law and grace in his writings, warning against Judaizers on the one hand, while exhorting Christian believers to retain the Hebrew cultural perspective of Scripture on the other.

In Hebrews 5:11-6:3 Paul sternly rebukes the Christian believers for their lack of understanding of the Hebrew perspective:

*“We have much to say about this [the nature and history of the Hebrew priesthood], but it is hard to explain, because you are dull of hearing. Although by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to re-teach you the basic principles of God’s word. [To your shame] you need milk, not solid food! Everyone who lives on milk is still an infant, inexperienced in the message of righteousness. **But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained their sensibilities to distinguish good from evil [and no longer have to be exhorted continually in matters of morals and ethics]. Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, NOT laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And this [moving past these Kindergarten lessons] we will do, if God permits.”*** [Bracketed comments here and throughout this book are mine for clarification and/or interpretation relevant to this study.]

Consider the implications for typical Christian churches in this exhortation. If you took away the weekly sermons directly or indirectly based on these topics what would be left? Not much in many churches. And that’s just among the more conservative Bible-centered churches. In these days of loose pop-culture morality and “seeker sensitivity” these “milky” subjects are considered *too* substantial and “fundamentalist” in many less faithful churches.

However, for those wanting to press on to spiritual maturity, Paul provides clues about what might be considered “meat” in contrast to the “milk:” We’ve noted that the immediate context suggests that learning and teaching the Hebrew perspective is “meat,” generally speaking, but he also makes a specific doctrinal point in his transition from chastisement back to the substance of his lesson:

*“When God made His promise to Abraham, since He had no one greater to swear by, He swore by Himself, saying, ‘I will surely [1] bless you and [2] multiply your descendants’ And so Abraham, after waiting patiently, obtained the promise. Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and their oath serves as a confirmation to end all argument. So when God wanted to make the unchanging nature of His purpose very clear to the heirs of the promise, He guaranteed it with an oath. **Thus by two unchangeable things [these promises] in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be strongly encouraged”** (Hebrews 6:13-18).*

As we will clearly show in this book, God’s promises to Abraham are at the heart of the Two House teaching. These two separate but parallel promises were held as one package by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in turn, but divided between the two houses of Jacob’s family: Leah’s son Judah receiving the first promise, and Rachel’s son Joseph receiving the second promise as their inheritance from their father.

There is certainly more that Paul would consider “meat” suitable for the spiritually maturing Christian, but understanding the Hebrew Roots of the gospel is the example that he used, and is the very study in which we are engaged. So let’s get on with it.

## THE HEBREW ROOTS MOVEMENT AS A MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH

Presumably many readers of a prophecy-themed book such as this likely agree with this writer that ours is probably the last generation before the Millennial Kingdom. But that is by no means a prerequisite to the study of the Hebrew roots of the New Testament and there is much to learn from this book that is unrelated to one's eschatology. Nevertheless, the facts and deductions we will examine support the last-days assumption.

One matter that is speculative on this writer's part is the notion that the Hebrew Roots movement we will now explore is in a spiritual sense a partial fulfillment of Malachi Chapter 4:1-5:

*“For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts. Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. **Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.**”*

Letting the Bible interpret the Bible, the “fathers” are almost certainly the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Romans 9:5), and the children are believers in God through faith (Romans 9:7-8).

As with the first advent of Christ, there may be a physical Elijah-figure (a last-days equivalent to John the Baptist) preceding His second coming as some believe. But in a broader spiritual sense the Spirit of Elijah (2 Kings 2:15) seem to already be operating through Christian believers of the Hebrew Roots movement, whose function and purpose is to awaken believers to their Hebrew spiritual heritage: turning the hearts of the children to the fathers.





## SECTION ONE

# A FRESH LOOK AT END-TIME PROPHECY

*A Christian Lawyer and Pastor Examines the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible "De Novo" from the Hebrew Cultural Perspective of the First Century Church*



## CHAPTER ONE:

# WHAT JESUS TAUGHT THE APOSTLES ABOUT THE LAST DAYS

*“And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?” And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it. Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it; and one of the elders said to me, “Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals” (Revelation 5:2-5).*

Prophecy of the end-times is a complex topic that is interwoven throughout the entire Bible. Where should we begin the process of unraveling its mysteries?

**Not the Old Testament.** Why? Because we are disciples of Christ, following in the footsteps of His Apostles. While it is impossible in my view to understand prophecy at anything more than a superficial level without also studying the Old Testament, a Christian’s first and primary guide must be Jesus, not Moses, Daniel, Ezekiel or any other Old Testament figure.

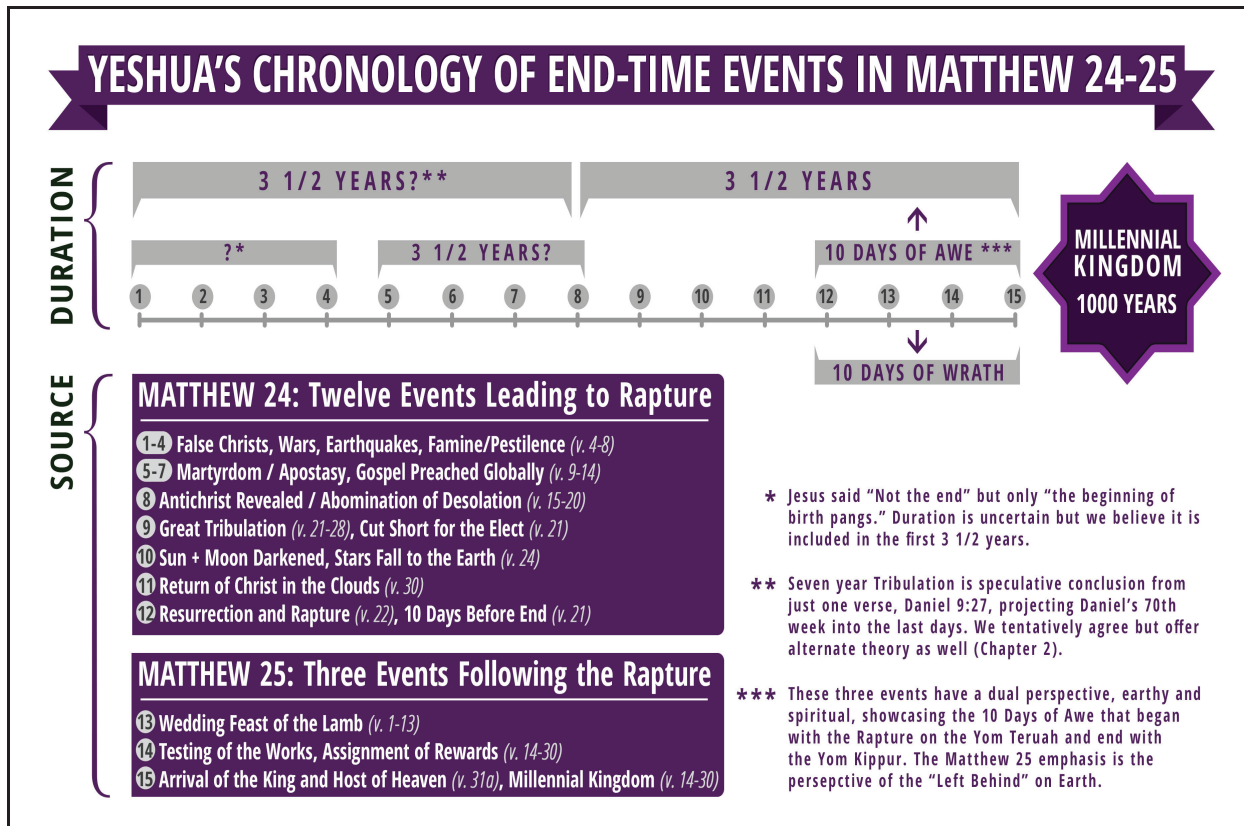
**Not the Book of Revelation.** Why? Because Revelation was delivered to and written by the Apostle John in about 95AD, long after the rest of the Apostles had passed on the teachings of Jesus to their disciples (including His teaching on the end-times) and most of them had passed on to Glory. Importantly, as we will see, the Book of Revelation is in large part a supplement to and best interpreted in light of what Jesus had already taught.

### **We Should Begin with “The Olivet Discourse.”**

The most logical starting point for the study of the end-times is the instruction given by Jesus (whose Hebrew name is Yeshua) to the disciples in response to their direct question, *“When will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”* (Matthew 24:3)

His answer, called the Olivet Discourse, or “The Lecture on the Mount of Olives,” is (in a natural reading of the text), a point by point chronological summary of end-time events which is repeated with only slight variation in the Gospels of Matthew (Chapter 24), Mark (Chapter 13) and Luke (Chapter 21), and reiterated in an expanded and annotated fashion in the Book of Revelation by the

Apostle John, who also authored the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel. Matthew, Mark and Luke are known as the “synoptic” (meaning “summary form”) Gospels, as opposed to John’s which is more topical. Interestingly, the Gospel of John is very closely aligned with the Biblical feast days and their symbolic significance (a little-recognized fact which we will explore later in this book).



## YESHUA’S CHRONOLOGY OF END-TIME EVENTS IN MATTHEW 24-25

For the purpose our analysis, Matthew’s account is most helpful, because the chronological nature of Jesus’ teaching continues through Chapter 25, ending with a glimpse at the Millennial Kingdom.

Importantly, Chapters 24-25 are clearly identified by Matthew as a single package, opening with the disciples’ query about the end-times (24:3) and closing with Matthew’s segue of 26:1: “...when Jesus had finished all these sayings...”

“All of these sayings” that we read between the bookends of Matthew 24:2 and 26:1 should thus be viewed as a set of lessons delivered together, explaining the events of the last days in a manner most relevant to His disciples. He is in essence saying, “This is what my followers will see with their own eyes and what they must watch for during the last days.”